

Paratroopers Dig in on Haifa Street

Pfc. Mike Pryor
82nd Airborne Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD -- Haifa Street - the infamous neighborhood in Baghdad has been the site of near constant wild west-style shoot-outs and gun battles between insurgents and multinational forces.

Haifa Street - the new home for a company of 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers. They've been working hard on their new digs, a formerly vacant palatial residence.

Paratroopers from Company B of the 82nd's 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment and Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Battalion, 9th Regiment seized and secured the vacant palace in a Christmas week operation they called 'Field of Dreams.'

The purpose of the operation was to fortify the palace so it can be used as a base from which to conduct aggressive operations against the insurgents, said Sgt. Michael Cooper of Co. B.

"We're going to get this place secure, and then get out there and start hitting heads in," Cooper said.

The operation began on Christmas Eve. All that night, while snipers kept a lookout from the rooftops of nearby



Photos by Pfc. Mike Pryor, 82nd Airborne Div. Public Affairs

A paratrooper from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, scans Haifa Street for signs of insurgent activity from an observation post inside his company's new base of operation.

buildings, Kiowa Warrior helicopters circled overhead, and Bradley Fighting Vehicles rumbled up and down the surrounding streets, combat engineers from the 82nd worked to build up the palace's defenses.

Engineers used cranes to ring the grounds of the palace with massive protective concrete barriers. They also removed trees, set up fighting positions, strung concertina wire, and covered the top of the building with camouflaged netting.

The insurgents in the area didn't exactly roll out the welcome mat for their new neighbors. They attacked repeatedly throughout the operation with small arms fire and mortars.

"There were small firefights going on constantly," said Pvt. Jeff Tesiny of Co. B. "It was pretty intense. You didn't know when (an attack) was coming, you just knew it was coming."

All in all, it was a memorable Christmas Eve, said Co. B's top non-commissioned officer, 1st Sgt. Scott Busma.

"That one will be kind of hard to forget," he said.

By the end of the week, the mission

was accomplished. Although they were still without heat, electricity, and running water, most of the paratroopers seemed happy with their new living arrangements.

"I'm liking this place," Sgt. David Frost said. "If we've done all this in a few days, imagine what we can do in a month."

Local insurgents may have been imagining the same thing. In the days after the palace was occupied and patrols began hitting the streets, the number of attacks on U.S. forces fell off dramatically.

"It's funny, when the 'Eight-Deuce' shows up, everyone just clears out or gets their act together," Frost said.

Frost and the other paratroopers from Co. B know they still have a long way to go before Haifa Street is totally pacified, but they have confidence in their ability to get the job done. A few days after the company moved into the palace for good, someone taped a hand-scrawled sign up on the door.

It said "Haifa Street Police."

The message to the criminals and terrorists in the neighborhood was clear: There's a new sheriff in town.



Sgt. David Frost of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Inf. Reg., closes the gate to the palace where his company is based on Baghdad's Haifa Street.

'Warriors' Bid Farewell to 1-25 Aviation...Mostly

Cpl. Benjamin Cossel
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division bid a fond farewell to 1st Battalion (Attack), 25th Aviation Regiment, an integral part of the Warrior's lethal, agile team, during a ceremony at the Warrior Pad Jan 3.

Originally intended to be a color casing, the ceremony was modified as a farewell to those Soldiers going home. With elections in Iraq looming on the horizon, more than 100 Soldiers from 1-25th have extended their tour in support of additional security concerns.

Over the course of their 10 months here, the camp has undergone an amazing transformation. All the while, the mission of the battalion has stayed the same.

"[We've flown] over 24,100 hours flown in support of 17 maneuver brigades and three divisions [1st Armored, 82nd Airborne, and the 1st Cavalry]," said Capt. Jeffrey McCoy, an administration officer with the 1-25th.

McCoy said the amount of hours the battalion's OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters have flown is a number not seen since the days of the Vietnam War.

"Those 24,100 hours," said McCoy, "are the culmination of over 6,000 reconnaissance, security, and close combat operations all over Iraq. We've

done a little bit of everything."

As Soldiers gathered into company formations, a stiff wind helped to proudly unfurl each company's guide-on as commanders called their units to attention and the ceremony began.

4th Brigade Commander, Col. James McConville approached the podium and addressed the assembled troops.

"We thought today was going to be a casing ceremony, but alas, the 'Warriors' still need you," McConville said. "When I talked to [1-25 Aviation's commander, Lt. Col.] Mike Lundy about keeping some of you here with us, he told me that there were so many volunteers to stay that he had to make the hard decision of who among you to send home!"

McConville went on to thank the Soldiers of 'Lightening Attack' for the outstanding service they have provided all of Task Force Baghdad, noting, in what has become the mantra of the 4th BCT, "When we fly, Soldiers don't die."

With McConville closing his remarks, Lt. Col. Michael Lundy offered his heartfelt thoughts.

"I'm taking a chance coming up here to speak with you today having written nothing down in preparation," he said. "I wanted to speak straight from the heart and to try and keep this short. We have had a



By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment salute as the National Anthem is played during 1-25th's farewell ceremony held on the 4th Brigade Combat Team's Warrior Pad at Camp Taji Jan 3.

tremendous experience over the course of our deployment; it has been an honor to be a part of the 'First Team.' "

Lundy further went on to thank the brigades and battalions Lightning Attack has supported throughout TF Baghdad and ended by thanking his Soldiers for always being "the vigilant scouts of the air-ground team".

In a gesture rarely seen outside organic Cavalry units, McConville presented Lundy and his entire unit with a certificate officially adding the battalion to the rolls of the 'Warriors Order of the Golden Spurs.'

In attendance at the ceremony was the 1st Cavalry

Division's Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli. Not originally scheduled to speak, Chiarelli said the importance of the 1-25th's role in supporting Task Force Baghdad moved him to say a few words.

"I asked my aid on the way up here if I had a speaking role today, and he told me I didn't," Chiarelli said. "But the role you Soldiers played in this task force cannot be understated. I'm going to bring back a whole lot more Task Force Baghdad Soldiers because of the work you Soldiers do. On behalf of all the brigade, battalion and company commanders who couldn't make it today, I wanted to personally thank you."

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

Shall I wait?
kam yajib an aakhud?

Monday
High: 57
Low: 40



Tuesday
High: 58
Low: 36



Wednesday
High: 57
Low: 34



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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News Notes

Cheese Sandwich Gets Man 3 Years

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) -- A man serving a life sentence for murder was sentenced to three additional years in prison for passing out cheese sandwiches while in jail. Douglas Eugene Wilson, 45, pleaded guilty Monday to possession of contraband and was sentenced by District Judge Thomas Kane. Prosecutors said Wilson had the sandwiches while in jail awaiting trial on the murder charge and he tried to give them to other inmates, which is a violation of jail rules. A sheriff's deputy testified at a hearing in May that they warned Wilson not to pass food to other inmate then shocked him with a stun gun when he ignored them.

Don't Annoy Taco Bell Employees...

MIDVALE, Utah (AP) -- Travis Dominguez, 20, has been accused of double-swiping the credit cards of what he considered to be irritating customers at a Taco Bell drive-through. "The customers he did it to annoyed him somehow, and he did it for revenge," said police Detective Scott Nesbitt. Dominguez didn't indicate how the customers annoyed him. Dominguez allegedly doubled-swiped credit cards five times, putting in different amounts on the second swipe, anywhere between \$20 to \$30. Dominguez faces five felony counts of unlawful use of a credit card, and single misdemeanor counts of theft and obstruction of justice.



Racine Journal Times

Brian Sweeney, left, and Josh Wilson, right, push their makeshift sofa toboggan up a sledding hill at Lockwood Park, in Racine, Wis.

Area Florists Going to Washington, D.C.

GEORGETOWN, Texas (*Austin American-Statesman*) -- When Casey Freytag got the call asking her to serve her country, she couldn't say no.

Her mission: flower arranging.

Freytag, Georgetown florist Susie Ramos and nearly 200 other florists from around the country soon will visit the U.S. capital, working day and night to arrange flowers for President Bush's second inauguration Jan. 20.

"It was a total surprise for me," said Freytag, who works for Freytag's Florist, her father's flower shop in Austin.

The florists are chosen by the Society of American Florists, which has managed arrangements for every presidential inauguration since John F. Kennedy's in 1961.

"This year, they really want a very elegant, sophisticated look," said Jennifer Sparks, the society's vice president of marketing.

Bush will be inaugurated amid more than 100 varieties of flowers - 250,000 in all and 70,000 roses alone - from the United States, Europe and Latin America, Sparks said. The arrangements will appear at the many balls and dinners surrounding the inauguration.

It will be old hat for Ramos, who owns the Flower Box in Georgetown and has been designing arrangements for 40 years. She worked on Bush's first inauguration in 2001.

"It's a very historical event, and everybody's just glad to be there," Ramos said, adding that she feels it is her patriotic duty to donate her



Austin American-Statesman

When Susie Ramos, who owns the Flower Box in Georgetown, gets to Washington, she'll work day and night to create floral decorations for President Bush's inauguration.

skills.

It will be the first trip to Washington for Freytag, who has been designing arrangements for about a year and a half.

"I'm not too, too nervous," said Freytag, who at 24 estimates she'll be one of the youngest designers.

Freytag and Ramos leave Jan. 16, joining 15 other Texas florists in the effort.

For such an event, Ramos said, flowers are a big deal. "What would a party or anything like that be without flowers? Sad," she said.

Penalty Undoes Victory, Jets Win

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (AP) -- The ball left San Diego place-kicker Nate Kaeding's foot and spiraled toward the uprights Saturday. Finally, it seemed, the Jets had run out of second chances.

The kick went wide-right, giving the Jets new life.

The Jets had scored 17 unanswered points in their AFC wild-card playoff game against the Chargers, only to see San Diego tie the score with 11 seconds to play. Moments before, it seemed the game was won and the Jets were about to celebrate, but a roughing-the-passer penalty against Jets linebacker Eric Barton gave the Chargers a second chance, and they used it to score the tying touchdown.

The Jets then quickly took the ball downfield, and Doug Brien kicked a 28-yard field goal to win a memorable game, 20-17, and sustain their surprising season.

It was a game filled with more than its share of bizarre moments.

San Diego Coach Marty Schottenheimer was flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct after running onto the field to argue a call. Edwards had a dispute with an assistant, Bishop Harris, and they had to be separated by players.

Curtis Martin continued to drive the offense, running for 66 yards on 18 carries. His backup, LaMont Jordan, added 50 more yards on 7 carries, including 25 yards on three runs that put the Jets in field-goal range in overtime.



AP

Jets' receiver Santana Moss beats the Chargers' Quentin Jammer on a 47-yard touchdown during the Jets' 20-17 win over the Chargers Saturday.

Rams Survive a Final Push by Seahawks

SEATTLE (AP) -- No matter what happens to them, no matter how much melodrama their coach drags them through, the St. Louis Rams still carry themselves like a championship team. Never mind that their Super Bowl victory is now five years old. Forget that they stumbled to an 8-8 record this season. The Rams believed into the final seconds of Saturday's wild-card game that Seattle had no business beating them.

So when Seahawks quarterback Matt Hasselbeck's final pass bounced out of the hands of receiver Bobby Engram and hit the turf in the end zone, preserving a 27-20 St. Louis victory, the Rams walked off the field with a swagger that may have seemed strange to anyone but them.

"I think this game was about respect," Seahawks running back Shaun Alexander

said. "They didn't respect our game and expected to win. That's the confidence that comes from a championship team."

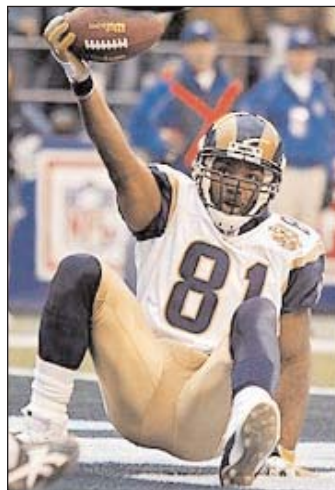
The Rams had a game-winning drive in the fourth quarter, and marched 76 yards in three and a half minutes. Quarterback Marc Bulger confidently zipped a 17-yard pass to tight end Cam Cleeland with 2 minutes 11 seconds left.

But the drama did not end with the Rams' touchdown. Seattle got the ball back and promptly marched downfield.

That is when Hasselbeck's final pass, thrown only after he had eluded the Rams' pass rush, hit Engram in the hands and fell incomplete.

Hasselbeck dejectedly walked off the field as the Seahawks fans, howling only seconds earlier, milled silently toward the exits.

"I wish I had it back,"



AP

Rams' Torrey Holt holds up the ball after making a touchdown reception in the first quarter.

Hasselbeck said. "It was the last play and the ball was in my hands. I should have done something with it."

In Brief

Seven is Enough for Pitt & Aniston

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Hollywood glamour couple Brad Pitt and Jennifer



Aniston have split. "We would like to announce that after seven years together we have decided

to formally separate," the couple said in a statement. The couple didn't indicate if they plan to divorce but said, "We happily remain committed and caring friends with great love and admiration for one another." The separation, first reported on People magazine's Web site, comes 4 1/2 years after the pair's wedding and after months of speculation that their marriage was in trouble.

Fans Have 70th Bash for Elvis

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) -- If he were still alive, Elvis Presley would have turned 70 on Saturday. But old age and the unfortunate problem of being deceased haven't slowed down the King. "There's no age to him," said Jerry Engelby, one of 800 or so fans gathered on Graceland's front lawn for a cake cutting and "Happy Birthday" sing-along. "He's just Elvis." That he was born in 1935 and died in 1977 did little to tarnish the fans' memories of a rock 'n' roll rebel or bespangled superstar. Elvis Presley Enterprises, the business arm of the estate, brought in \$45 million last year, making Elvis one of the top earning dead entertainers in the world.